Chief Shabbona – "Built Like A Bear"

Shab-o-nay'

Chief Shabbona – Bear Of Kankanee
This is a historical / biographical work
based on the public domain book
“Lives Of Famous Indian Chiefs”
by Norman B Woodsmanwith edits, images, arrangement
by Larry W Jones

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SHABBONA - THE CELEBRATED POTTAWATOMIE CHIEF

"Is Saul also among the prophets?" Is Shabbona classed among the famous Indian chiefs? He who was only chief of a small band or village? Yes, and for the best of reasons.

"Howe'er it be, it seems to me, 'Tis only noble to be good; Kind hearts are more than coronets, And simple faith than Norman blood." - *Alfred Tennyson*

However, we will tell the story of his life, and let the reader judge whether he is rightly classified. According to his own statement he was born in an Ottawa village about the beginning of the Revolutionary War, in the year 1775 or 1776.

We have before us, as we write, three different sketches of his life, and though they all agree as to the date, they mention three distinct birth places, widely separated. Thus we find that Nehemiah Matson, his principal biographer, says "he was born at an Indian village on the Kankakee River, in what is now Will County, Illinois."

Caroline M. McIlvane, librarian of the Chicago Historical Society, in her interesting sketch of Shabbona, says, "he was born at an Indian village on the Maumee River"; while one of the speakers at the dedication of the Shabbona monument, which occurred at Morris, Illinois, October 23, 1903, said "Shabbona was born at the principal village of the Ottawas in Canada." Who shall decide when the doctors disagree?

His father, a nephew of the illustrious Pontiac, was a war-chief of the Ottawas, and was undoubtedly a man of ability, as he was one of the commissioners representing his tribe in Wayne's treaty at Greenville, in 1795, and made a speech on that occasion.

(**Note**) The Treaty of Greenville, formally titled Treaty with the Wyandots, etc., was a 1795 treaty between the United States and indigenous nations of the Northwest Territory (now Midwestern United States), that redefined the boundary between indigenous peoples' lands and territory for European American community settlement. Included were the tribes of Indians, called the Wyandots, the Delawares, Shawanoes, Ottawas, Chipewas, Putawatimes, Miamis, Eel-River, Weea's, Kickapoos, Piankashaws, and Kaskaskias.

Kanakee River

When Shabbona was an infant his parents moved to Canada, where the boy grew up and was instructed in all the Indian lore of his day. In youth he excelled above all competitors in the many feats of strength, speed and endurance. His name is usually interpreted to mean "Built like a bear," and it was certainly appropriate, as he was five feet nine inches in height, well proportioned, though with very broad, deep chest, heavy shoulders, large neck and a head of extraordinary size.

Mr. Gurdon S. Hubbard, agent of the American Fur Company, at Chicago, said of Shabbona: "From my first acquaintance with him, which began in 1818, to his death, I was impressed with the nobility of his character. Physically he was as fine a specimen of a man as I ever saw—tall, well proportioned, strong and active, with a face expressing great strength of mind, and goodness of heart."

Fur traders who knew him in the prime of his life, speak of him as a very handsome Indian, excelling in horsemanship, dancing and athletics of all kinds.

The name of the subject of this sketch was spelled many different ways, but was usually pronounced as though spelled Shab-o-nay. Hon. George M. Hollenback, of Aurora, Illinois, says: "I have heard 'The Old Settler' pronounce his own name many times and it was always as though it was spelled Shab-o-neh."

Nehemiah Matson, in "Memories of Shaubena," says, "In four treaties where his signature appears, the orthography varies, and each of his educated descendants and connections spell the name different. I have in my possession, either written or printed, seventeen different ways of spelling the name. Some of these are so unlike that it is hard to believe they were intended for the same person."

The French form of the name was Chamblee, and this spelling was used by his old friend Sauganash, or Billy Caldwell, in the following document, the original of which reposes in the archives of the Chicago Historical Society:

"This is to certify that the bearer of this name, Chamblee, was a faithful companion to me during the late war with the United States. The bearer joined the late celebrated warrior, Tecumseh, of the Shawnee Nation, in the year 1807, on the Wabash River, and remained with the above warrior from the commencement of hostilities with the United States until our defeat at Moravian Town, on the Thames, October 5, 1813. I have been witness to his intrepidity and courageous warrior conduct on many occasions, and he showed a great deal of humanity to those unfortunate sons of Mars who fell into his hands.

(**Note**) Billy Caldwell, baptized Thomas Caldwell (March 17, 1782 – September 28, 1841), known also as Chief Sauganash (one who speaks English), was a British-Potawatomi fur trader who was commissioned captain in the Indian Department of Canada during the War of 1812. Born in a Mohawk refugee camp near Fort Niagara, Billy was the son of a Mohawk mother and William Caldwell, a Scots-Irish immigrant to North America and a Loyalist British officer during the American Revolutionary War.

He became multilingual, learning Potawatomi, English, and French. He moved to the United States in 1818 and settled there. In 1829 and 1833 he negotiated treaties on behalf of the United Nations of Chippewa, Ottawa and Potawatomi with the United States, and became a leader of a Potawatomi band at Trader's Point (Iowa Territory). He worked to gain the boundary long promised by the British between white settlers and Indians, but never achieved it.

BILLY CALDWELL (CHIEF SAUGANASH)
BORN OLD FORT NIAGARA CANADA MARCH 17 1780
DIED COUNCIL BLUFFS IOWA SEPTEMBER 28 1841
SON OF A MOHAWK WOMAN AND AN IRISH CAPTAIN IN THE
BRITISH ARMY – PLAYED IMPORTANT ROLE IN EARLY CHICAGO
HISTORY – NEGOTIATED 1833 TREATY OF CHICAGO AND LED
POTAWATOMI TO LOCAL AREA IN 1837
WELCOMED JESUITS TO ESTABLISH ST JOSEPH MISSION 1838–1841
DIED IN 1841 – BURIED BEHIND THE MISSION

We have decided to adopt the style used in spelling the town in Illinois named for Chief Shabbona, as also on the monument over his grave.

Wiomex Oquaka “Pa-kwuk-no-quah” Shabonah

About the year 1800, according to a letter from Frances R. Howe, of Porter Station, Indiana, a grandniece of Shabbona, "an extended hunting excursion brought him from the Ottawa country into the Pottawatomie hunting grounds, where he was kindly received by a chief and his family. The young hunter made such a fine impression on Spotka and his wife that they gave him their daughter in marriage." This Pottawatomie wife of Shabbona was Wiomex Okono, whose home, according to Miss McIlvane, was located where the city of Chicago now stands. On the death of Spotka, and before he was forty years old, our hero was made chief of his adopted nation.

He soon afterward moved his band to what has since been called Shabbona's Grove, in the southern part of De Kalb County. Here he resided until 1837. Matson locates this Pottawatomie band, into which Shabbona married, on the Illinois River, a short distance above the mouth of the Fox River.

In the summer of 1807, when Shabbona was on the Wabash, he spent some time at the Shawnee village with Tecumseh. This was probably his first acquaintance with the great chief. On a warm day in early Indian summer, in 1810, while Shabbona and his young men were playing ball, Tecumseh, accompanied by three chiefs, mounted on spirited black ponies, rode into the village.

On the next day a favorite fat dog was killed and a feast made for the distinguished visitors. On their departure their host accompanied them, stirred by Tecumseh's eloquence on behalf of his pet scheme of uniting all the Western tribes in a confederation, to wage war against the whites.

The five chiefs now visited the Winnebagos and Menomonees. Passing through Green Bay they crossed the southern part of Wisconsin to Prairie du Chien. From here they descended the Mississippi to Rock Island, and visited the Sac and Fox villages of Wapello and Black Hawk.

Shabbona now returned to his village, but Tecumseh and party continued down the river to St. Louis.

The following summer Shabbona was present at the second council at Vincennes, which ended as the former one, without any concessions on either side, and consequently without effecting a reconciliation.

(**Note**) Because Vincennes, Indiana, was centrally located in the most populated part of the Indiana Territory, it was designated as the capital. Harrison was appointed governor of Indiana Territory on 12 May 1800, and served in that position for twelve years. One of his tasks was to obtain land from the Indians to be ceded to the Federal government. Almost three million acres were acquired during Harrison's twelve–year term. Shawnee chieftain Tecumseh and his brother Elskwatawa, known as "The Prophet," went to Vincennes to meet with Harrison to try to get back some of the ceded land. When Harrison refused, Tecumseh got other tribes to join in his Confederacy. Because of the threat of violence, Harrison led his troops to Tippecanoe, site of Prophet's Town, the center of the Indian Confederacy. The Prophet led an unsuccessful attack on Harrison's troops. Harrison's victory at the Battle of Tippecanoe gained him national recognition and the nickname "Old Tippecanoe." The power of the Indian tribes was weakened.

The next day after the council Shabbona they started on a journey South, with Tecumseh and two other Shawnee chiefs. They spent several months among the Creeks, Cherokees and Choctaws. Returning to the Wabash late in the fall, about two weeks after the battle of Tippecanoe, they saw the remains of soldiers which had been dug up by the Indians and scattered over the battlefield. In the summer of 1812 messengers from Tecumseh visited many villages in northern Illinois, informing the tribes that war had been declared between the United States and England, and offering the warriors large sums of money to fight for the latter. These emissaries wished to capture Fort Dearborn before the garrison knew that war existed. Shabbona intended at first to remain at home and take no part in the war, but hearing that a number of warriors from other villages and a few from his own had left for Chicago, he mounted his pony and followed them.

Shabbona and a few warriors arrived at Chicago on the afternoon of the fatal day of the Fort Dearborn massacre. This was August 16, 1812, the same day of the cowardly surrender of General Hull at Detroit.

(**Note**) The Battle of Fort Dearborn (sometimes called the Fort Dearborn Massacre) was an engagement between United States troops and Potawatomi Native Americans that occurred on August 15, 1812, near Fort Dearborn in what is now Chicago, Illinois (at that time, wilderness in the Illinois Territory). The battle, which occurred during the War of 1812, followed the evacuation of the fort as ordered by the commander of the United States Army of the Northwest, William Hull. The battle lasted about 15 minutes and resulted in a complete victory for the Native Americans. After the battle, Fort Dearborn was burned down. Some of the soldiers and settlers who had been taken captive were later ransomed.

Following the battle, the federal government became convinced that all Indians had to be removed from the territory and the vicinity of any settlements, as settlers continued to migrate to the area. The fort was rebuilt in 1816.

The chieftain and his young warriors were horrified at the sight of blood and carnage. The sand along the beach where the massacre had occurred was dyed and soaked with the blood of forty-two dead bodies of soldiers, women and children, all of whom were scalped and mutilated.

The body of Capt. William Wells, for whom Wells street, Chicago, is named, lay in one place, his head in another, while his arms and legs were scattered about in different places.

The captain had been very friendly with Black Partridge, and that chief now gathered up his remains and gave them decent burial near where they were found, but the remains of the other victims of the massacre lay where they had fallen until the rebuilding of Fort Dearborn, in 1816, when they were collected and interred by order of Captain Bradley.

The prisoners who had been spared were taken to the Indian camp, which was near the present crossing of Jackson and State streets, and closely guarded.

John Kinzie, whose residence stood on the north bank of the river opposite the fort, had been the Indian trader at this place for eight years, and, of course, he had many friends among the Indians. As a special favor he was permitted to return to his own house, accompanied by his family, including a step-daughter (the wife of Lieutenant Helm) now badly wounded.

The evening after the massacre the chiefs present held a council to decide the fate of the prisoners, and it was agreed to deliver them to the British commander at Detroit, according to the terms of surrender. This would have been done, but unfortunately many warriors from a distance came into camp after dark, who were thirsting for blood, and seemed determined to murder the prisoners, in spite of the decision of the chiefs in council and the stipulated terms of surrender.

Black Partridge and Shabbona, with a few of their warriors, determined to make an effort to protect the inmates of Kinzie's house from the tomahawks of the blood thirsty braves; accordingly they took a position on the porch with their rifles crossing the doorway. But the guard was overpowered by sheer numbers, as a large party of hostile Indians, with their faces painted, rushed by them, forcing their way into the house. The parlor and sitting-room were quickly filled with Indians, who stood with scalping-knives and tomahawks in hand, waiting the signal from their leader to commence the bloody work.

(**Note**) Black Partridge or Black Pheasant (1795–1816) was a 19th-century Peoria Lake Potawatomi chieftain. Although a participant in the Northwest Indian War and the War of 1812, he was a friend to early American settlers and an advocate for peaceful relations with the United States. He and his brother Waubonsie both attempted to protect settlers during the Battle of Fort Dearborn after they were unsuccessful in preventing the attack. A memorial at the site of the massacre in present-day Chicago, Illinois once included a statue of Black Partridge preventing a tomahawk from hitting a Mrs. Margaret Helm, the wife of one of the defenders at Fort Dearborn. Black Partridge Woods, a state park in Cook County, Illinois, as well as Partridge Township in Woodford County, Illinois are also named in his honor.

Mrs. Kinzie, with her children, and Mrs. Helm, sat in a back room weeping at the thought of the horrible death which awaited them in a moment. Even Black Partridge was in utter despair, and said to Mrs. Kinzie, "We have done everything in our power to save you, but now all is lost you and your friends, together with the prisoners at the camp, will be slain." But there was a chief in the camp who had more influence than either Black Partridge or Shabbona.

At the instant Black Partridge spoke a loud whoop was heard at the river. He immediately ran to see what it meant, and in the darkness saw a canoe approaching, and shouted to its occupant, "Who are you, friend or foe?" The new comer leaped ashore exclaiming in reply, "I am Sauganash," His voice rang out like a trumpet on the still night air, reaching the ears of Mrs. Kinzie and her friends in the back room of her house, and a faint hope sprung up in her heart. She knew Sauganash, or Billy Caldwell, the halfbreed, could save them if he only reached the house in time.

Black Partridge now shouted, "Hasten to the house, for our friends are in danger and you alone can save them!" The tall, manly-looking chief, with his head adorned with eagle feathers and rifle in hand, ran to the house, rushed into the parlor, which was still full of scowling Indians with weapons drawn, and by entreaties, and threats of the dire vengeance of his friend and kinsman, the great Tecumseh, who never, when present, allowed a massacre of prisoners, he prevailed on them to abandon their murderous designs. Through his influence Kinzie's family and the prisoners at the camp were saved a horrible death.

It was afterward found that a young half-breed girl, who had been in Kinzie's family for some time, where she had received kind treatment, seeing the hostile Indians approaching, ran to Billy Caldwell's wigwam, and informed him of their danger, when he hastened to the rescue just in time. This young half-breed girl afterward married a Frenchman named Joseph Pathier.

Chief Sauganash, or Billy Caldwell, one of the heroes of the Fort Dearborn massacre, was a son of Colonel Caldwell, of the British army, who for many years was stationed at Detroit. His mother was a squaw of great beauty and intelligence, a connection (possibly a sister) of the renowned Tecumseh. He was known by the name of Sauganash, which in the Pottawatomie language means an Englishman.

Billy Caldwell had a good education for that time, was a very popular chief, the idol of his band, and possessed a remarkable influence over the entire tribe. He lived at Chicago twenty-six years in a cabin located on the north side of the river, near where North Water crosses La Salle street. He went west with his tribe in June, 1836, and died in Kansas some years after this.

Sculpture from the Fort Dearborn Massacre Monument by Carl Rohl-Smith (1893). The sculpture portrays the rescue of Margaret Helm (center) by Potawatomi chief Black Partridge (right).

Late in the autumn after the Chicago massacre, just as Shabbona and his band were about to start on their winter hunt, two messengers from Tecumseh arrived at his village. They brought a good-sized package of presents, consisting of beads, rings and various kinds of ornaments, intended mainly for the Squaws. Tecumseh had sent the wampum to Shabbona, asking him to bring his warriors and join his forces, and for their services they were promised a large amount of British gold. Tecumseh's emissaries said, moreover, that all the Pottawatomies along the Illinois and its tributaries, including the bands of Black Partridge, Como, Schwinger and Comas, had dug up the hatchet and pledged their support;

and that Thomas Forsyth, a trader at Peoria, had raised a company of French and half-breeds and gone to the war. These statements all proved to be false. Not one of the bands mentioned had agreed to go to war, and Shabbona afterward said had he known the true facts he would have remained at home, and continued the hunt, which would have been more profitable.

(**Note**) Major Thomas Forsyth (December 5, 1771 – October 29, 1833) was a 19th-century American frontiersman and trader who served as a U.S. Indian agent to the Sauk and Fox during the 1820s prior to the Black Hawk War. His writings, both prior to and while an Indian agent, provided an invaluable source of the early Native American history in the Northwest Territory. Thomas Forsyth became a successful Indian trader in his youth, spending several years living with the Ottawas on Saginaw Bay. As early as 1798, he spent the winter on an island in the Mississippi a short distance downstream from present-day Quincy, Illinois.

But believing the report, the winter hunt was indefinitely postponed, and the following day Shabbona started for the seat of war at the head of twenty-two warriors. When they reached the St. Joseph River they fell in with Colonel Dixon's recruits, consisting of a large number of warriors led by Chief Black Hawk, who had followed around the lake from Green Bay.

Shabbona became an aide to General Tecumseh, served until the end of the war, and stood by his side when he fell in the battle of the Thames. He always revered the memory of Tecumseh and loved to talk about him.

(**Note**) The Battle of the Thames, also known as the Battle of Moraviantown, was an American victory in the War of 1812 against Tecumseh's Confederacy and their British allies. It took place on October 5, 1813, in Upper Canada, near Chatham. The British lost control of Southwestern Ontario as a result of the battle; Tecumseh was killed, and his confederacy largely fell apart. British troops under Major General Henry Procter had occupied Detroit until the United States Navy gained control of Lake Erie, cutting them off from their supplies. Procter was forced to retreat north up the Thames River to Moraviantown, followed by the tribal confederacy under Shawnee leader Tecumseh who were his allies. American infantry and cavalry under Major General William Henry Harrison drove off the British and then defeated the Indigenous peoples, who were demoralized by the death of Tecumseh in action. American control was re-established in the Detroit area, the tribal confederacy collapsed, and Procter was court-martialed for his poor leadership.

In giving his account of the death of Tecumseh to the early settlers around him, Shabbona said that on the morning of the battle of the Thames, Tecumseh, Billy Caldwell and himself were sitting on a log near the camp-fire, smoking their pipes, when a messenger came to Tecumseh, saying General Proctor wished to see him immediately. The chief arose and went hastily to the general's headquarters, but soon returned, looking quite melancholy, without saying a word, when Billy Caldwell said to him,

"Father, what are we to do? Shall we fight the Americans?" To which he replied, "Yes, my son; before sunset we will be in their smoke, as they are now marching on to us. But the general wants you. Go, my son, I shall never see you again." Tecumseh appeared, he said, to have a presentiment that the impending battle would be his last. Tecumseh posted his warriors in the thick timber flanking the British line, with himself at their head, and here awaited the approach of the Americans.

Soon the battle commenced, and the Indian rifles were fast thinning the ranks of the Americans, when a large body of horsemen were seen approaching on a gallop. These troopers came bravely on until they approached the line of battle, when Tecumseh and his warriors sprang forward with the Shawnee war-whoop to meet the charge. For a moment all was confusion, being a hand-to-hand fight, and many were slain on both sides.

Tecumseh, after discharging his rifle, was about to tomahawk the man on a white horse (Col. R. M. Johnson), when the latter shot him with a pistol. The tomahawk, missing its deadly aim, took effect on the withers of the horse, while Tecumseh, with a shrill whoop, fell to the ground. Shabbona said he was standing by the side of Tecumseh when he received the fatal shot, and sprang forward, to tomahawk the slayer of the great chief, but at that instant the horse reared and fell, being pierced by many bullets, and the rider, badly wounded, was thrown to the ground but rescued by his comrades. The warriors, no longer hearing the voice of Tecumseh, fled from the field, when the battle ended.

Battle of the Thames and the death of Tecumseh

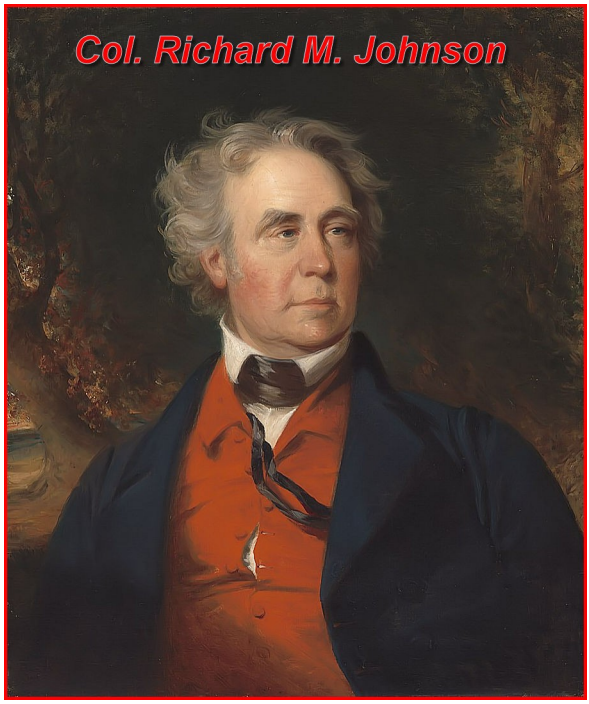
Death of Tecumseh.

We extract the following (says the Farmers' Register, of Troy) from a valuable work, entitled——"*Views of the Campaigns of the Northern Army, &c.*" written by Mr. Samuel R. Brown, and just isssued from this office. This extract is from the narrative of the overthrow of the British and Indian armies at the Moravian town, on the 5th October last.—Mr. Brown was a volunteer in Col. Johnson's corps of mounted riflemen, at the time the events he speaks of took place. The greater part of the work is the result of actual observation.

"On the left the contest was more serious; Col. Johnson, who commanded on that flank of his regiment, received a terrible fire from the Indians which was kept up for some time. The Colonel most gallantly led the head of his column into the hottest of the enemy's fire, and was personally opposed to Tecumseh. At this point a condensed mass of savages had collected. Yet regardless of danger, he rushed into the midst of them.—so thick were the Indians at this moment, that several might have touched him with their rifles. He rode a white horse and was known to be an officer of rank—a shower of balls was discharged at him—some took effect—his horse was shot under him—his clothes, his saddle, his person was pierced with bullets. At the moment his horse fell, Tecumseh rushed towards him with an uplifted tomahawk, to give the fatal stroke, but his presence of mind did not forsake him in this perilous predicament—he drew a pistol from his holsters and laid his daring opponent dead at his feet. He was unable to do more the loss of blood deprived him of strength to stand. Fortunately, at the moment of Tecumseh's fall the enemy gave way, which secured him from the reach of their tomahawks; he was wounded in five places; he received three shots in the right thigh and two in the left arm. Six Americans and twenty-two Indians fell within twenty yards of the spot where Tecumseh was killed and the trains of blood almost covered the ground."

The Rhode-Island Republican March 03, 1814

That night, after the battle, Shabbona accompanied a party of warriors to the fatal field and found Tecumseh's remains, where he fell. A bullet had pierced his heart and his skull was broken, probably by the breech of a gun; otherwise the body was untouched. Near Tecumseh's remains lay the body of a large, fine-looking warrior, decorated with plumes and paint, whom the soldiers, no doubt, mistook for the great chief, as it was scalped and large portions of skin stripped from the body. On the day of the battle Tecumseh was dressed in plain buckskin, wearing no ornaments except a British medal suspended from the neck by a cord. The fact that Tecumseh was very modest and never wore anything to distinguish him from his warriors, though a British general as well as head chief of the Indian Confederation, was one cause of his great popularity. He was one with his men, and ruled by force of character and actual ability. This habit probably saved his life in other battles, and his body from being mutilated by the Kentucky soldiers, many of whom were backwoodsmen who fought the Indians in their own way.



Shabbona's narrative is the most interesting, and probably the most authentic account of the death of Tecumseh we have found in history. Many years after, when Col. Richard Mentor Johnson was Vice-President of the United States, Shabbona visited Washington, and the two got together and had a long conversation about the battle of the Thames and the death of Tecumseh.

Before leaving Washington Colonel Johnson presented the chief a heavy solid gold ring, in token of friendship, which he wore until the day of his death, and by his request it was buried with him.

At the time of the Winnebago War, in the summer of 1827, the settlers along the frontier were very much alarmed, as it was thought that the Pottawatomies were about to take part in it. It was now that Shabbona first earned his title of "The white man's friend," by mounting his pony and visiting almost every Pottawatomie village in the State, explaining to the chiefs the folly of going to war with the United States, and in most cases his arguments were successful.

(**Note**) The Winnebago War, also known as the Winnebago Uprising, was a brief conflict that took place in 1827 in the Upper Mississippi River region of the United States, primarily in what is now the state of Wisconsin. Not quite a war, the hostilities were limited to a few attacks on American civilians by a portion of the Winnebago (or Ho-Chunk) Native American tribe. The Ho-Chunks were reacting to a wave of lead miners trespassing on their lands, and to false rumors that the United States had sent two Ho-Chunk prisoners to a rival tribe for execution.

Most Native Americans in the region decided against joining the uprising, and so the conflict ended after U.S. officials responded with a show of military force. Ho-Chunk chiefs surrendered eight men who had participated in the violence, including Red Bird, whom American officials believed to be the ringleader. Red Bird died in prison in 1828 while awaiting trial; two other men convicted of murder were pardoned by President John Quincy Adams and released.

As a result of the war, the Ho-Chunk tribe was compelled to cede the lead mining region to the United States. The Americans also increased their military presence on the frontier, building Fort Winnebago and reoccupying two other abandoned forts. The conflict convinced some officials that Americans and Indians could not live peaceably together, and that the Natives should be compelled to move westward, a policy known as Indian removal. The Winnebago War preceded the larger Black Hawk War of 1832, which involved many of the same people and concerned similar issues.

Big Thunder, who had a village on the Kishwaukee, near where Belvidere now stands, had agreed to go to war; but when Shabbona visited him, and pointed out the impossibility of conquering the whites, he changed his mind, and, returning the wampum which the Winnebagos had sent him, decided to remain at peace. Shabbona also visited Big Foot's village, but here his mission was a failure. Chief Big Foot was in favor of uniting all the Western tribes to make war on the frontier and drive the whites from the country. He had promised Chief Red Bird, the noted Winnebago chief, to become his ally, and should take up the tomahawk when the war began.

Soon after Shabbona's visit, Big Foot and his band came to Chicago to draw their annual payment from the Government, and while there they deported themselves in a way to alarm the people.

(**Note**) Big Foot (Potawatomi: Maungeezik, meaning “Big Foot”) was a leader of the Prairie Band of Potawatomi on Kishwauketoe (today Geneva Lake) in what would become the U.S. State of Wisconsin. Legend has it he received the name Big Foot from the huge snow shoe tracks he left in the snow while in pursuit of a deer.

Big Foot likely led his band in the Battle of Fort Dearborn in Chicago, part of the War of 1812, in which a Potawatomi war band killed 38 American soldiers, 14 civilians, captured dozens more, and burned Fort Dearborn to the ground. Following the War of 1812, the United States regularly sent agents to Geneva Lake to spy on Big Foot, including the Ottawa leader Shabbona and the British-Potawatomi fur trader Billy Caldwell, which interfered with Big Foot's plans to make further war against the United States. He spent several decades preparing for further hostilities against the United States that never materialized.

After the Potawatomi’s defeat in the Black Hawk War of 1832, in which Big Foot did not participate, he negotiated and signed the 1833 Treaty of Chicago, which sold much of southeastern Wisconsin and northeastern Illinois to the United States. Under the treaty, the United States forcibly removed Big Foot and the Potawatomi band from Geneva Lake to the Platte River in Missouri and later to Lawrence, Kansas.

The night after drawing their pay some of the Indians painted their faces, danced around the agency-house singing war songs, and occasionally yelling at the top of their voices. On the following night Fort Dearborn was struck by lightning and set on fire, when several buildings were burned. Big Foot and his warriors refused to render any aid in extinguishing the flames, but stood by as idle spectators.

The Indians were encamped in a grove north of the river and appeared sulky and unfriendly, constantly avoiding conversation with the whites, but frequently engaged in earnest conversation with each other. It was also noticed that they would stop talking as soon as other Indians or whites approached. In a few day's the band left at night for their village, and their strange conduct caused the people to believe they intended evil.

The next day after Big Foot's departure the citizens called a meeting to discuss the situation and plan for their safety. This meeting was attended by whites, half-breeds and Indians. It was decided at this meeting to send Shabbona and Billy Caldwell as messengers to Big Foot's village to get an explanation of their strange conduct and learn, if possible, what they intended to do. The two chiefs started on their mission the following morning.

Big Foot was a large, raw-boned, big-footed, dark-visaged Indian. His countenance was bloated by intemperance. He is said to have ruled over his band with despotic sway, and usually his will was law. His village was on the banks of the lake, which formerly bore his own name, but is now called Lake Geneva.

When Shabbona and Billy Caldwell reached their destination they thought it prudent for one to hide in the cedar timber on the ridge overlooking the village, to watch proceedings, while the other had the interview with Big Foot and his band. It was Shabbona who rode boldly into the village, but the meeting between the two chiefs was far from friendly.

Big Foot at once accused Shabbona of being a friend of the whites and a traitor to his tribe, saying had it not been for him, Billy Caldwell and Alexander Robinson, all of the Pottawatomies would unite with the Winnebagos in making war on the Americans; to which Shabbona replied that he could not assist the Winnebagos against the United States, as the whites were so strong they must eventually conquer, and the war could only result in the ruin of that tribe.

(**Note**) Alexander Robinson (1789 – April 22, 1872) (also known as Che-che-pin-quay or The Squinter), was born on Mackinac Island to an Ottawa mother and a Scots-Irish immigrant fur trader father. He became a fur trader and ultimately settled near what later became Chicago. Multilingual in Odawa, Potawatomi, Ojibwa (or Chippewa), English and French, Robinson also helped evacuate survivors of the Fort Dearborn Massacre in 1812. In 1816, Robinson was a translator for native peoples during the Treaty of St. Louis. He became a Potawatomi chief in 1829 and in that year and in 1833, he and fellow Metis Billy Caldwell negotiated treaties on behalf of the United Nations of Ottawa, Chippewa, and Potawatomi with the United States. Although Robinson helped lead Native Americans across the Mississippi River in 1835, unlike Caldwell, Robinson returned to the Chicago area by 1840 and lived as a respected citizen in western Cook County until his death decades later.

A large number of warriors had collected around the two chiefs, listening to their conversation, when Big Foot became so enraged that he seized his tomahawk and would have killed Shabbona had not the warriors interfered and prevented it. Shabbona was now disarmed, bound and thrown into an unoccupied wigwam and guarded by two warriors to prevent his escape.

Billy Caldwell, from his hiding place, was watching closely, and when he saw his friend stripped of his arms, bound and led away, probably to be put to death, he became alarmed, fearing he might meet the same fate if caught; consequently he mounted his pony and hastened back to Chicago and reported Shabbona either

killed or a prisoner in Big Foot's village. The citizens were greatly alarmed, as their worst fears were confirmed. Shabbona had been known by the people of Chicago a long time. He was held in high estimation by both whites and Indians, and all were grieved at his loss. But while grief and excitement was at its height, Shabbona returned, his pony covered with foam, and the grief was turned into rejoicing.

It seems that a council was called the night after he was taken captive, to consider what to do with him. It was decided in council that it was unsafe to keep Shabbona a prisoner, as his band and other bands, as well as the whites at Chicago, whose messenger he was, would certainly come to his rescue, and if executed his death would be avenged. So, against the protest of Big Foot, who was still enraged at him, the warriors decided to set him free the next morning. This was accordingly done, and when his belongings, including his pony, were returned to him, a friend whispered in his ear to ride for his life, as Big Foot would surely pursue and he would be killed if overtaken. This accounted for the foam on the pony. It was, indeed, a race for life, as Big Foot and four warriors were hot on his trail for many miles, but Shabbona's pony proved to be the best.

During the period from 1823 to October 3, 1828, Fort Dearborn was not permanently occupied by troops. Consequently for five years the citizens of Chicago were without protection.

The inhabitants of Chicago consisted principally of French, half-breeds and a few Yankee adventurers engaged in the fur trade. The people had been on good terms with the Indians, and often exchanged friendly visits with them; but now war existed between the whites and Winnebagos, and it was known that Big Foot's band, and perhaps other of the Pottawatomies, were ready to join them. With the exception of the bands controlled by Shabbona, Billy Caldwell and Alexander Robinson, the country for two hundred miles around was full of discontented Indians, who were liable to dig up the tomahawk at any time. So the citizens almost imagined they were in danger of a second massacre. But Shabbona quieted their fears by offering to bring his warriors to Chicago and guard it, if it became necessary, and his proposition the people hailed with much rejoicing. Happily this was not found necessary, as shortly after this an express came from Galena with the good news that the Winnebago war was over and Chief Red Bird a prisoner.

In the summer of 1829, a Connecticut Yankee, by the name of George Whitney, came to Shabbona's village for the purpose of trading with the Indians. Whitney's outfit consisted of a covered wagon drawn by two mules, and loaded with a miscellaneous stock of articles of Indian traffic, including a barrel of whisky. The Indian trader had with him a jolly young half-breed named Spike, who performed the duties of teamster, cook and interpreter.

After pitching his tent in the edge of Shabbona's grove near the village, Whitney enjoyed an excellent trade with the Indians, especially in whisky. Many Indians got drunk and became noisy and abusive to their families, seeing which, Shabbona went to Whitney and requested him not to sell any more whisky to his people; but regardless of this request,

Whitney continued to sell his distilled damnation to all who had the price. At this Shabbona became justly indignant, and going to his tent one morning he told the trader that if he did not leave the grove that day he would be at the trouble of moving him. As soon as Shabbona had gone, Whitney asked Spike what the angry chief had said. "He said," answered Spike, "that if you are found here at sunset your scalp will be seen to-morrow morning hanging on the top of that pole," pointing to a high, straight pole used by the Indians in their crane dances.

On hearing this Whitney turned pale and trembled; he began at once to take down his tent and pack his goods; at the same time he ordered Spike to catch the mules and hitch them to the wagon as soon as possible. When everything had been hastily tumbled into the wagon, Whitney seized the reins, and whipping his mules into a gallop, quickly disappeared in the direction of Chicago, and was never heard of again in that part of the country.

The Sacs and Foxes, Winnebagos and Pottawatomies held a council in February, 1832, at Indian town. Black Hawk, Neopope, Little Bear and many other chiefs of their tribe were present.

White Cloud, or the Prophet, represented the Winnebagos, while Shabbona, Waba, Shick Shack, Meommuse, Waseaw, Sheatee, Kelto, Autuckee and Waubonsie were the Pottawatomie chiefs in attendance.

The object of this council was to unite the different tribes in a war against the frontier settlements, hoping to check or drive back the tide of emigration, and save their villages and hunting grounds from the encroachments of the whites. During the council, which lasted a number of days, many speeches were made for and against such a union.

The Winnebago chief, White Cloud, called the Prophet, was the leading spirit of the council. His zeal and oratory gave him great influence. He said, in one of his speeches, "If all the tribes are united, their warriors will be like the trees of the forest"; to which Shabbona replied, "Yes, but the soldiers of the whites will outnumber the leaves on the trees."

Description of the two distinguished prisoners (Black Hawk and the Prophet) at the time they were delivered to Gen. Joseph M. Street, by a gentleman who was present.

Black Hawk, a Potawatomy by birth, but raised by the Saukies, appears to be about 60 years old, has a small bunch of grey hair on the crown of his head, the rest is bare has a high forehead, a Roman nose, a full mouth which generally inclines to be a little open, has a sharp chin, no eye brows, but a very fine eye; his head is frequently thrown back on his shoulders; he is about 5 feet 4 or 5 inches high. at present he is thin, and appears much dejected, but now and then he assumes to the aspect of command. He held in his left hand a flag, in the other the tail, with the back skin, head and beak of the Calumet Eagle; with this he frequently fans himself. His Indian name is Muscata mish ka kack.

The Prophet, a half Saukie and half Winnebago, is about 40 years old, nearly six feet high; is stout and athletic; has a large broad face, short blunt nose, large full eyes, broad mouth, thick lips, with a full suit of hair. He wore a white cloth head dress which rose several inches above the top of his head; the whole man exhibiting a deliberate savageness; not that he would seem to delight in honorable war, or fight; but making him as the Priest of association or sacred murder. He had in one hand a white flag, while the other hung carelessly by his side. They were both clothed in very white dressed deer skins fringed at the seams with short cuttings of the same. His Indian name is Wabo-kie-shiek—(White Cloud.)

Martinsburg Gazette and Public Advertiser

(Martinsburg, W. Va. September 27, 1832

Shabbona, while not a great orator, possessed honesty and good judgment, and this in a measure atoned for his lack of eloquence. After the death of Chief Black Partridge and Senachwine no chief among the Pottawatomies had as much influence as Shabbona. While Black Hawk was a prisoner at Jefferson Barracks, in the fall of 1832, he told Thomas Forsyth, the former agent of the Sacs and Foxes, that, had it not been for Shabbona the whole Pottawatomie nation would have joined his standard, and then he could have continued the war for years, dictated his own terms of peace, and his people would not have been crushed and humiliated.

As evidence of the influence of Shabbona it is said that, at the Indiantown council, he induced all the Pottawatomie chiefs except Waubonsie to oppose the union of the tribes against the whites.

Black Hawk now regarded his scheme as a failure, and mounting his pony left for home with a sad heart. However, the Prophet, Neopope and Wisshick were not so easily discouraged, and started on a mission to the villages on the upper Rock River, and in Wisconsin. A few of the chiefs accepted the wampum, and promised support in case of war, but most of the Winnebagos, remembering the disastrous war of a few years ago under Chief Red Bird, remained neutral and advised against another encounter with the whites. But Neopope and Wisshick reported that all the Pottawatomies at the north and most of the Winnebagos would join him in a war if he would come up in their country.

Deceived by these false statements, Chief Black Hawk determined to prosecute his original plans and started up the Rock River with his entire band.

Chief Black Hawk (Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak**)**

When Black Hawk ascended to the present site of Byron without meeting the expected reinforcements, he became discouraged. After fixing his camp on a stream, since appropriately called Stillman's Run, he dispatched a runner for his old friends in arms, Shabbona and Waubonsie, who immediately started to his camp.

After dinner Black Hawk took his two friends a short distance, and seating themselves on a fallen tree, he told them the story of his wrongs. Said he, "I was born at the Sac village, and here I spent my childhood, youth and manhood. I like to look upon this place, with its surroundings of big rivers, shady groves and green prairies. Here is the grave of my father and some of my children; here I expected to live and die and lay my bones by the side of those near and dear unto me; but now, in my old age, I have been driven from my home, and dare not look again upon this loved spot."

Here the old chief broke down and wept, a rare thing for an Indian. After wiping his tears away he continued, almost heartbroken, "Before many moons you, too, will be compelled to leave your homes, the haunts of your youth your villages, cornfields and hunting grounds will be in possession of the whites, and by them the graves of your fathers will be plowed over, while your people will be driven on westward toward the setting of the sun to find a new home beyond these Father of Waters."

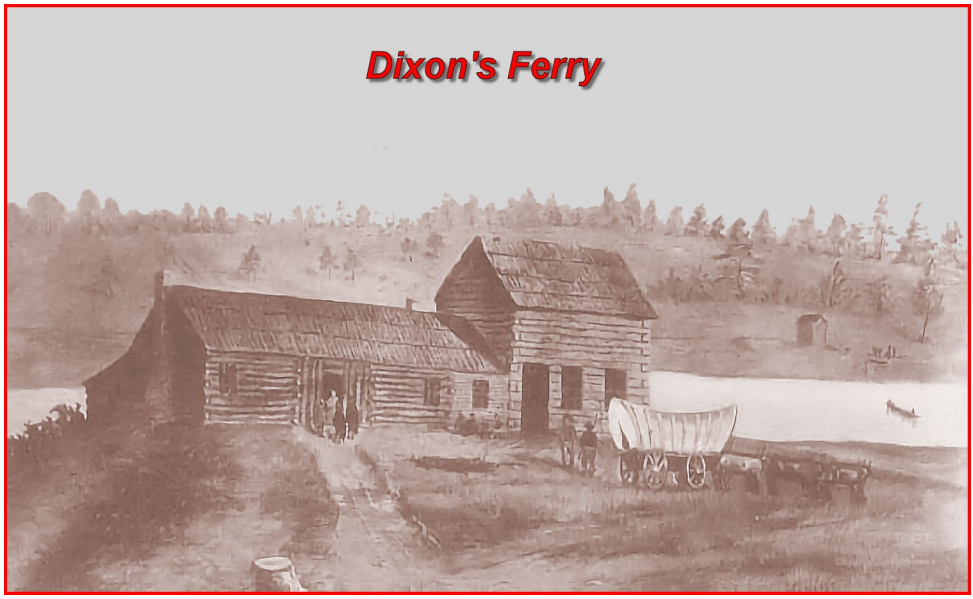
This prediction was fulfilled in both cases. Continuing, the aged chief said, "We have always been as brothers; have fought side by side in the British War; have hunted together and slept under the same blanket; we have met in council at religious feasts; our people are alike and our interests the same.

"I am now on the warpath. Runners have been sent to different villages bearing wampum and asking the chiefs to meet my band in council. Once united we would be so strong the whites would not attack us, but would treat on favorable terms, and return to me my village and the graves of my people."

Shabbona, in reply, said he could not join him in a war against the whites; that Governor Clark, General Cass and his friends at Chicago had made him many presents, some of which he still kept as tokens of friendship, and while in possession of these gifts he could not think of raising the tomahawk against their people. Shabbona also declined to attend the proposed council, and advised Black Hawk to return west of the Mississippi as the only means of saving his people; the two chiefs parted, to meet no more in this life.

Chief Waubonsie, seeing the decided stand taken by Shabbona, also refused to take part in the approaching war. However, Waubonsie agreed to attend the council of chiefs.

The next day after this interview Shabbona mounted his pony and went to Dixon's Ferry to offer the service of himself and warriors to General Reynolds.



There was among the volunteers a worthless vagabond named George McKabe, who was employed as cook in one of the companies. McKabe was married to an Indian squaw belonging to Black Hawk's band, but was too lazy to hunt or work and spent his time loafing around the village drinking whisky and stealing from the settlers. He joined the volunteers at Black Hawk's suggestion who thought it well to have a spy among the whites to inform him of their plans, and warn the Indians when an attack was intended.

This wretch, who was equal to any villainy, whether it concerned friend or foe, while strolling through Stillman's camp at Dixon's Ferry, saw Shabbona when he arrived, and told some of the rangers that he was a Sac Indian belonging to Black Hawk's band, and there as a spy. The rangers, believing McKabe's story, dragged Shabbona from his pony, disarmed him, and abused him in a shameful manner. In vain he exclaimed in his broken English, "Me Shabbona; me Pottawatomie; Neconche moka man" (a friend of the white man). The drunken ruffians paid no attention to him and would have murdered him outright had not Mr. Dixon, the keeper of the ferry, heard of it and hurried to his rescue. This gentleman had known Shabbona a number of years, and claiming him for his friend and guest he was permitted to take the chief to his home, and afterward introduced him to Governor Reynolds, General Atkinson, Colonel Taylor and others, and he became a prime favorite with officers and men.

Black Hawk's grand council was interrupted by the arrival of a messenger with his pony in a gallop, bringing tidings of the approach of Stillman's army. Some of the chiefs were on the way but had not yet arrived, and those who were present, including Waubonsie, mounted their ponies and rode back to their villages with all speed.

So the council never met, and Black Hawk failed to obtain the aid of the friendly chiefs; some even became allies of the whites.

There were, however, certain disaffected Pottawatomies, belonging to different bands, who joined Black Hawk. These, with a few Sac and Fox warriors and Winnebagos committed many outrages and murders on the defenseless settlers along the Illinois, Fox and Rock rivers, and their tributaries. Many others would have been butchered had they not received warning from their friend in need and friend indeed, Shabbona.

The night after Stillman's retreat, as Shabbona was sleeping at his home he was awakened by a messenger, who reported that a battle had been fought and Black Hawk's band had been victorious. The chief knew only too well that war parties would be immediately sent out to murder the nearest settlers. So he made a hasty preparation to warn them of danger. Having dispatched his son, Pypegee, to Holderman's Grove settlements and his nephew, Pyps, to those on Fox River, he mounted his fleetest pony and started for Bureau and Indian Creek.

The first house Shabbona reached was that of Squire Dimmick, who lived near the present site of La Moille. When informed of his danger, Dimmick replied that "he would stay until his corn was planted," adding that "he had left the year before, and it proved a false alarm, and he believed it would be so this time." Shabbona's reply to this was, "If you will stay at home, send off your squaw and pappooses, or they will be murdered before the rising of to-morrow's sun!" Shabbona had now mounted his pony again, and as he turned to go he raised his hand above his head, and in a loud impressive voice exclaimed "Auhaw Puckegee" (you must leave) and started off in a gallop to warn others. This last remark caused Dimmick to change his mind, and hastily putting his family and a few things into a wagon he left his claim, never to return.

Shabbona continued to ride until he had warned all the settlers on Bureau and Indian creeks, and they at once fled to Hennepin, Peoria and Springfield, where they remained until the war was over, while a few never returned to their claims. It was not a false alarm the settlers received, for during the night of the same day that Shabbona notified them, Girty, a notorious half-breed, led a band of about seventy warriors to Bureau. During the night this band of cut-throats visited almost every house in the settlement, in some of which they found the fire still burning, but were surprised to find their intended victims had fled. Girty's band encamped in the edge of the timber west of the present site of Princeton.

When Shabbona's nephew, Pyps, had warned the settlers on Fox River of the commencement of hostilities, he went on a visit to a young squaw, of whom he was enamoured, at Rochell's village, south of the Illinois. After remaining a few days, he was returning home by way of Indian Creek when he noticed a large body of Indians entering the timber within six miles of the settlement. Hurrying home, he immediately informed Shabbona about the Indians and also of having noticed some of the settlers still in their cabins.

Knowing that these settlers would be almost certain to fall victims to these Indians, Shabbona determined to go and warn them a second time. Accordingly, about midnight, after giving some directions to his family and friends, in case he should be killed, which he knew would be his fate if seen by the hostiles, Shabbona started for the Indian Creek settlement.

He thus deliberately periled his life to save his white friends. It was certainly one of the most courageous deeds recorded in history, for—

"The noblest place a man can die Is where man dies for man."

But he seems to have been protected by Providence, for the Sac bullet was never moulded that was destined to lay our hero low.

Shabbona arrived at his destination about sunrise, before the people were out of bed, with his pony in a foam of sweat. He quickly informed the settlers that a large band of hostile Indians were seen in the timber about six miles above on the evening before, and unless they left immediately they would almost certainly be killed. On hearing this, Hall, one of the leading citizens, was in favor of starting for Ottawa at once. But another man with greater influence, by the name of Davis, opposed it, saying he did not fear the Indians, and no redskin could drive him from his home. Unfortunately the counsel of Davis prevailed, and the settlers refused to heed the warning of Shabbona, and, strange to say, made no preparation for defense.

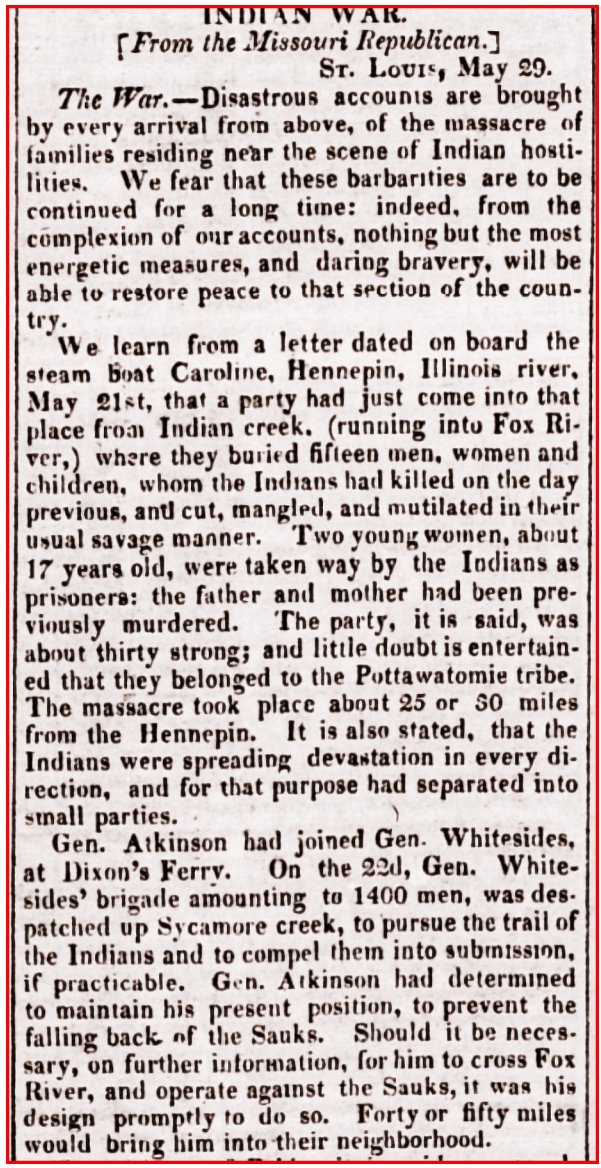
On the fatal day of the Indian Creek massacre, about four o'clock in the afternoon of May 20, 1832, the red fiends made their attack under the leadership of Girty, the infamous half-breed. Most of the men were at work in the blacksmith shop, and the women busy with their household affairs. The whites were completely surprised and shot down before they could make an effectual resistance.

In less time than it takes to record it, fifteen people were butchered, including Hall and Davis; the entire community was wiped out of existence, except a few who were in the field, and the two sisters, Sylvia and Rachel Hall, carried off into captivity.

The next day after the massacre, a company of rangers from Chicago and vicinity, under Captain Naper, and also a party from Putnam County, visited the scene of horror and buried the dead. A fine monument was afterward erected over the remains of the victims by their surviving friends, containing the names and ages of those massacred.

The Hall sisters were conveyed on horseback to Black Hawk's camp, near the present site of Madison, Wisconsin. Meantime their brother, John W. Hall, marched with his regiment as far north as the lead mines of Galena. Here he informed Col. H. Gratiot, agent of the Winnebagos, of his sisters' captivity, and the gallant colonel employed two chiefs, White Crow and Whirling Thunder, to ransom the captives, and they started at once to Black Hawk's camp. A council was now called and it was agreed to ransom the prisoners for two thousand dollars and forty horses, besides a quantity of blankets, beads, etc.

But the matter was not yet ended; a young chief claimed Rachel as his prize, intending to make her his wife, and was unwilling to give her up. He even threatened to tomahawk her rather than let her go. After some delay a compromise was effected by giving him ten horses; but before parting with her he cut off two of her locks of hair as a trophy. The girls were now taken to Galena, where they were rejoiced to meet their brother, John W., whom they supposed was killed in the massacre.



INDIAN WAR.

[*From the Missouri Republican.*]

St. Louis, May 29.

The War.—Disastrous accounts are brought by every arrival from above, of the massacre of families residing near the scene of Indian hostilities. We fear that these barbarities are to be continued for a long time: indeed, from the complexion of our accounts, nothing but the most energetic measures, and daring bravery, will be able to restore peace to that section of the country.

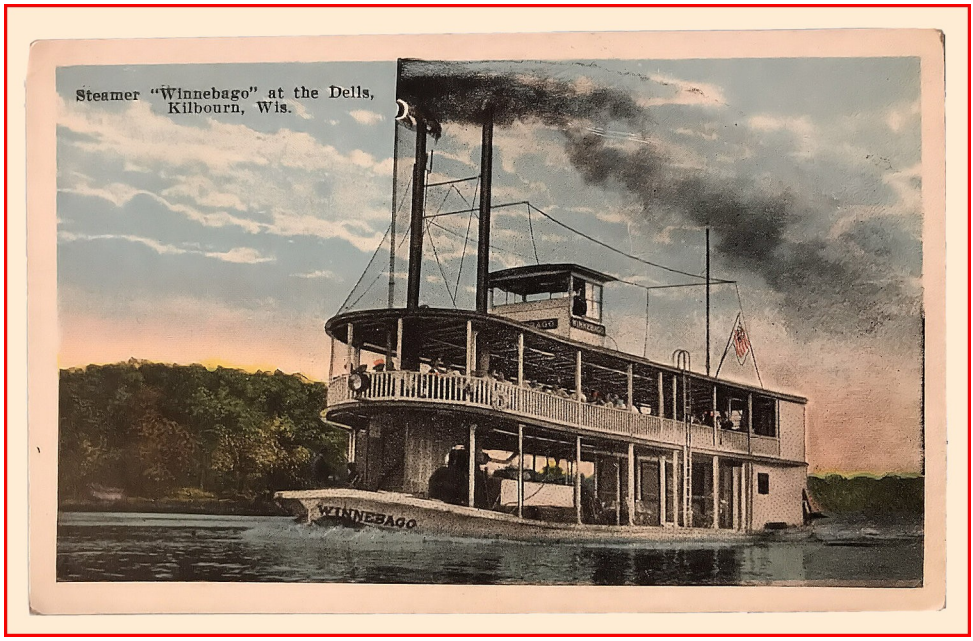
We learn from a letter dated on board the steam boat Caroline, Hennepin, Illinois river, May 21st, that a party had just come into that place from Indian creek, (running into Fox River,) where they buried fifteen men, women and children, whom the Indians had killed on the day previous, and cut, mangled, and mutilated in their usual savage manner. Two young women, about 17 years old, were taken way by the Indians as prisoners: the father and mother had been previously murdered. The party, it is said, was about thirty strong; and little doubt is entertained that they belonged to the Pottawatomie tribe. The massacre took place about 25 or 30 miles from the Hennepin. It is also stated, that the Indians were spreading devastation in every direction, and for that purpose had separated into small parties.

Gen. Atkinson had joined Gen. Whitesides, at Dixon's Ferry. On the 22d, Gen. Whitesides' brigade amounting to 1400 men, was despatched up Sycamore creek, to pursue the trail of the Indians and to compel them into submission, if practicable. Gen. Atkinson had determined to maintain his present position, to prevent the falling back of the Sauks. Should it be necessary, on further information, for him to cross Fox River, and operate against the Sauks, it was his design promptly to do so. Forty or fifty miles would bring him into their neighborhood.

Phenix gazette Alexandria D.C. June 12 1832

An account of the capture of these sisters having been published throughout the country, the people everywhere were much rejoiced at their deliverance. The people of Galena also vied with each other in honoring them and bestowing presents, including several handsome dresses, made in the latest fashion.

After about a week's stay at Galena they started to St. Louis, accompanied by their brother, on board the steamer Winnebago—the same boat, by the way, on which Black Hawk himself was afterward conveyed to Jefferson Barracks.



Steamer Winnebago

At St. Louis the sisters were entertained by Governor Clark. During their stay with the Governor's family money amounting to $470 was collected for them, besides many valuable presents. It was here they were met by Rev. Erastus Horn, an old friend of their father, who conveyed them to his home in Cass County, Illinois. When their brother, John W. Hall, married and settled in Bureau County, the two girls made their home with him. The State Legislature presented them with a quarter section of canal land near Joliet, and Congress afterward made an appropriation of money for their benefit.

Sylvia, the older, married Rev. William Horn, and established a home at Lincoln, Nebraska. Rachel married William Munson and settled at Freedom, La Salle County, near the scene of her captivity. Here she remained until her untimely death a few years afterward.

When Pyps, Shabbona's nephew, notified the settlers on Fox River he came to a family by the name of Harris. It seems that Mr. Harris and his two sons were away at the time hunting their horses, which had strayed off the day before,

so the family had no means of escape except on foot. This would not have been so bad, but for the fact that old Mr. Combs, Mrs. Harris' father, made his home with her, and being confined to his bed with inflammatory rheumatism, could not go with the family in their flight. Mrs. Harris regretted to leave him to almost certain death. But the old hero exclaimed, "Flee for your lives, and leave me to my fate; I am an old man and can live but a short time at any rate." Mrs. Harris and the grandchildren left him with sore hearts, never expecting to see him again. Traveling slowly on foot they were overtaken by the Aments and Clarks, and later by Mr. Harris and his two sons. In due time they arrived at Plainfield.

Soon after the departure of the Harris family, the house was entered by a party of Indians, who, finding supper on the table sat down and ate. During the meal they talked about the escape of their intended victims, and one remarked to the rest, "Shabbona did this." Verily, "the way to a man's heart is through his stomach." Others besides "civilized man can not live without cooks," or at least it is here demonstrated that even savages appreciate good cooking. Mrs. Harris was a famous cook of that day, and this fact probably saved her father's life.

It is more than probable that had the Indians discovered "Grandpa Combs" before they had eaten that good supper, while they were hungry and savage, the old gentleman would have been tomahawked and scalped. But after supper the Indians were in a better humor, and instead of killing the helpless old man, they actually administered to his wants, and tried to make him comfortable. Not only so, but for nearly a week they visited him daily, supplying him with food and drink. Thus matters continued until Harris's House was visited by a company of rangers commanded by Captain Naper, who found old Mr. Combs so much improved in health that he was able to go with them to Plainfield, and afterward to Chicago with his friends. He survived the war several years, and often spoke of his kind treatment from the Indians when he expected to be killed.

While the regular army, under the command of General Atkinson, camped at Dixon's Ferry waiting for reinforcements to enable them to pursue Black Hawk, a number of Pottawatomie warriors joined it and were mustered into service. The warriors were led by Shabbona, Waubonsie and Billy Caldwell. General Atkinson, after consulting with his officers and other parties about the merits of the three chiefs, gave the command of the warriors to Shabbona. This gave offense to the other chiefs, each of whom expected the honor, and they shortly left the service, taking with them some of the warriors. Shabbona and his band remained with the army during the campaign, doing good service as scouts, and keeping General Atkinson posted on the movements of Black Hawk.

General Atkinson and his army came up with Black Hawk's band near four lakes, where they were secreted in the thick timber, surrounded by water and swampy land. An attempt was made to construct rafts to cross the water, but, night coming on, it was abandoned. In the darkness of the night some of Black Hawk's warriors came within hailing distance of the army and shouted across the narrow lake and swamp that Black Hawk's braves could whip Atkinson's army, and their squaws could whip Shabbona's warriors.

At these taunting words Shabbona became very indignant and asked permission of the general to take his warriors around the head of the lake and attack Black Hawk's men during the darkness of the night, but the request was not granted.

Next day the army went around the lake to attack the enemy. Shabbona, at the head of his warriors, was ordered to charge the enemy. The order was obeyed. The Indians, yelling their war-whoop, charged through the timber, but met with no resistance, as Black Hawk and his warriors had fled during the night.

In the winter of 1831 and 1832, Governor Clark, of St. Louis, who had been appointed general Indian agent of the West, hearing that Shabbona had prevented the Pottawatomies from becoming allies of Black Hawk, sent him a number of presents, among which was a handsome fur hat with a wide silver band. War and carnage were represented on one side of this silver band, on the other friendship, pipe of peace, etc. For safe keeping Shabbona carried this hat to his friend, John M. Gay, who lived a few miles north of what is now Wyanet. Mr. Gay put it for safekeeping in the garret, but the following spring, during the Black Hawk war, he and his family fled from home, leaving the hat, with many other things, in his house. On returning at the close of the war he found that the Indians had carried off most of his things, including Shabbona's hat. After the war the chief called for his hat, and was much grieved to find it gone. The Indians who stole the hat took it to Black Hawk's camp and presented it to that chief, and it was worn by him at the great feast and council near four lakes. It was afterward picked up on the battlefield of Wisconsin River by one of General Dodge's rangers, who carried it to Galena, where it was kept some time as one of the trophies of the war. Some years after the close of the war this hat was recognized by an Indian as the one stolen from Gay's house and worn by Black Hawk at the Council of Four Lakes.

The prediction made by Black Hawk that Shabbona would soon be compelled to abandon his beloved village and go west to a reservation was fulfilled in the summer of 1836. At that time the Indian agent, Capt. J. B. Russell, notified the chief that his band must remove to the lands assigned them by the Government, in accordance with the treaty, as no one but himself and family could remain at the Grove. In imagination I hear some one say, "But this Government order applied only to Shabbona's band. Of course, the Government would not be so ungrateful to 'The White Man's Friend' as to force him to leave his happy home, where he had spent the most of his life, and go to a new reservation in a distant State." Granting that this was the intention of the Government, it was still a cruel deed to force the chief in his declining years to make a choice between his village and his band. Let it not be forgotten that not only Shabbona, but practically his entire band of warriors, fought on the side of the whites during the Black Hawk War, besides saving the lives of many settlers by warning them of danger. Common justice, to say nothing of gratitude, should have impelled the Government to make an exception in the case of Shabbona and his band. A reservation should have been given them around and including Shabbona's Grove, and the title should have been secured to them,

"While the grass grows And the water flows."

"Consistency is a jewel," but our Government never displayed any of it in its dealings with the Indians. Black Hawk's warriors, who arrayed themselves against the Government, were sent across the Mississippi to a reservation in the rich land of Southeastern Iowa, while Shabbona's warriors, who fought bravely as allies of the Government, are banished to a reservation in distant western Kansas, a somewhat arid and inhospitable region. Friend and foe are treated exactly alike, when a few greedy white men covet the Indian's village and cornfields. The ways of our Government in its dealings with the Indians are past finding out.

When notified by the agent, Shabbona said he did not like to leave his happy home, but could not think of being separated from his people, therefore he would go with them. The agent offered to move them at the expense of the Government, but Shabbona said he did not require it, as they had plenty of ponies to carry all their tents, and the hunters could supply them with food while making the journey. Shabbona's band left their grove in September, but stopped on Bureau Creek about six weeks, engaged in hunting and fishing. Here he received the visits from a number of settlers, some of whom were the people he had warned during the Black Hawk War. These now expressed their gratitude by bringing into his camp green corn, melons, squashes and fruit of all kinds, and in return he sent them turkeys and venison.

Shabbona was afflicted with ague (infectious fever) at this time and seemed very grateful to his white friends for their visits and presents. He told them he had hunted on Bureau thirty years in succession, but this was probably his last hunt, as he was going to his reservation in the Far West in a few days, where he expected to leave his bones. He was very sad at the thought of being compelled to leave the country where he had spent his infancy, youth and manhood, and be forced in his old age to seek a new home in a distant land. At the time of his departure for Kansas his band consisted of one hundred and forty-two persons, old and young, and they had one hundred and sixty ponies. The journey was resumed late in October. Soon after Shabbona and his band settled on the reservation in western Kansas, the Black Hawk band of Sacs and Foxes were moved from Iowa to the same locality. This band, under the leadership of Neopope, who was second in command during the war, settled on a reservation only about fifty miles from Shabbona's, Neopope had often declared he would kill Shabbona, Pypegee and Pyps for notifying the settlers of danger and fighting against them during the late war. Shabbona had been warned of these threats, but did not believe he would ever be harmed.

In the fall of 1837, Shabbona, Pypegee, Pyps and five others went on a buffalo hunt about one hundred miles from home. Neopope heard of it, and thinking this a good time to take his revenge, raised a war party and followed them.

About midnight, when all were asleep, this party of Sacs and Foxes attacked the camp, killing Pypegee and Pyps and wounding another hunter, who was overtaken and slain. Shabbona, his son, Smoke, and four others escaped from the camp, but Neopope and his warriors were hot on their trail and pursued them almost to their village. The fugitives reached home the third day, more dead than alive, having traveled more than one hundred miles on foot, without rest or food. Knowing that he would be killed if he remained in Kansas, the aged chief left immediately for his farm in De Kalb County, Illinois, accompanied by his family, consisting of two squaws, children and grandchildren, about twenty-five people in all. He arrived at his destination the latter part of November, 1837.

Some time during the spring of 1838, some of Shabbona's family discovered an old decrepit squaw hid in the thick timber near the village. Her face was partly covered with a buckskin headdress, and highly colored with different kinds of paint. Strange to say, she was armed with rifle, knife and tomahawk, and a jaded pony hitched near by showed evidence of a long journey. The aged squaw would give no account of herself, nor could they get her to tell whence she came or her destination. She seemed sullen and morose, and having been furnished with food, mounted her pony and left the grove. It was afterward learned that this old squaw was not a squaw at all, but Neopope, the war-chief of Black Hawk's band, who had assumed that disguise and was there to assassinate Shabbona. Having been discovered and fearing detection caused him to leave without accomplishing his object. Shabbona did not know the true character of the old squaw until he visited Kansas, after the death of Neopope, and the incident was told by some of his friends.

In the spring of 1849 Shabbona, with his family, went to visit his band in Kansas and remained there over two years. As soon as he was gone certain parties made affidavits that he had sold and abandoned his reservation and gone West to live. These papers were sent to the General Land Office at Washington, and the Commissioner decided that by abandoning his land Shabbona had forfeited his right to the reservation. When he returned in the fall of 1851 with his family, he was amazed to find the whites in possession of his village, cornfields and grove.

When he found himself deprived of all that he held dear, he broke down and cried like a child. Many days he gave himself up to sadness and refused to be comforted, and each night he went to a lonely place in the grove and prayed to the Great Spirit. To add insult to injury, the white ruffian who now had possession of the grove cursed the aged chief for cutting a few camp poles, and burning a few dry limbs for cooking, and ordered him to leave "his" grove, which had been Shabbona's home for fifty years. He was now old—past three score and ten—no longer capable of getting a living by hunting, as formerly, and with a number of small grandchildren depending on him for support. With a sad heart Shabbona looked for the last time upon the graves of departed loved ones, and then left the grove forever.

Shabbona never could understand why the Government should dispossess him of his reservation in his old age, just when he needed it most. Can you understand it, gentle reader?

The aged chief and his family now camped in a grove of timber on Big Rock Creek, where he remained some time undecided what to do. Here his white friends of other days came to see him and brought many presents.

It was during his stay at this place that the citizens of Ottawa, at the solicitation of ex-Sheriff George E. Walker, raised money to buy and improve a small tract of land on the south bank of the Illinois River, two miles above Seneca, in Grundy County. Here his friends built a comfortable frame dwelling, with fencing and other improvements, and presented it to Shabbona for a home. The house was pleasantly situated and commanded a splendid view of the river, but Shabbona preferred to live in a wigwam and the residence was used only as a storehouse.

The Government gave him an annuity of two hundred dollars, as a Black Hawk War veteran; this fund, supplemented by gifts from his friends, kept him above want. While living at this place, Shabbona received a call from Williamson Durley, of Putnam County, who gave him a special invitation to visit at his house. Mr. Durley had been a merchant at Hennepin a number of years, and Shabbona often traded with him for goods for his band, paying for them in furs. Their business relations were pleasant and Shabbona regarded Mr. Durley as one of his best friends.

While on this visit Shabbona was accompanied by three daughters and his grandson, a lad of twelve years of age, named Smoke. At the suggestion of Mr. Durley the whole party dressed themselves in full Indian costume, with feathers, paint, rings, beads, etc., and mounted on horseback they visited Hennepin, where they attracted much attention. All the citizens turned out to honor them with a hearty reception.

At different times Shabbona was selected by the Pottawatomie tribe to represent their interest at the National Capital. On one of these visits to Washington, General Cass introduced him to the President, some of the members of Congress, heads of departments and others. A large crowd had collected in the rotunda of the capitol to see Shabbona, when General Cass introduced him to the audience, saying, "Shabbona is the greatest red man of the West; he has always been a friend to the whites and saved many of their lives during the Black Hawk War." At the conclusion of this speech people came forward to shake hands with the chief, and many of the ladies met him with a kiss.

On another of the trips to Washington, while Shabbona, with other chiefs, was standing on the east portico of the capitol engaged in conversation an elegantly dressed gentleman approached the group, and, looking earnestly at Shabbona, exclaimed, "Were you not in the battle of Frenchtown in 1813?" On receiving an affirmative answer, he continued, "Do you remember saving the life of a wounded lieutenant from Kentucky by the name of Shelby?" The chief remembered the incident, when the gentleman exclaimed, "Well, I am that same Lieutenant Shelby!" Mr. Shelby showed his gratitude by the presentation of several gifts.

Hon. Perry A. Armstrong, of Morris, Illinois, for many years an intimate friend of Shabbona, says: "We were in Joliet one chilly night in November, 1857, and put up at the Exchange Hotel. Arising a little after daylight, we opened the window-blind of our bedroom, when we noticed an Indian slowly walking up and down the sidewalk opposite the hotel, beating his arms around his body to keep up a circulation of blood. A high, tight-board fence stood on the west of the sidewalk, close up to which we beheld three persons lying, well wrapped in blankets. On reaching the street we were greeted with 'Boozhu coozhu nicon' (How do you do, my friend), in the familiar voice of Shabbona. His wife, daughter and grandchild were sleeping sweetly and comfortably under the shelter of the board fence, wrapped in their own blankets, to which the old chief had added his while he kept watch and ward during the long cold night over his sleeping loved ones, although he was over fourscore years of age. Always considerate of the rights and comforts of others, Shabbona was diffident and cautious in approaching the home of a white man. He had reached Joliet late the night previous, and was too diffident to wake anybody to ask for shelter. Finding this high fence would ward off the fierce western wind, he arranged his wife and daughter and little grandchild so they could be comfortable, and gave them his own blanket, while he kept himself from chilling by constant exercise."

On one occasion Shabbona was on a hunting trip in the big woods of the Kankakee River, hoping to find a deer, accompanied by his family and some friends from Kansas. While the old chief and his friends were off hunting the man who owned the grove where they were encamped came and abused the squaws by calling them hard names, and ordered them to leave. He even tore down one of the tents in his anger. Of course Shabbona was indignant when he returned and heard of it, and determined to move his camp the next morning.

That evening about sunset the owner of the timber, accompanied by two of his neighbors, returned to the Indian camp, when the old chief offered his hand, at the same time exclaiming, "Me Shabbona." This introduction usually acted as a talisman among settlers, by giving him a hearty welcome wherever his camp was pitched, but with this ruffian it failed of its magical effect. His answer was to inform the chief, with an oath, that if he did not immediately leave he would destroy his tents.

Shabbona took out some pieces of silver and offered them to him in payment for a few tent poles and firewood. But this did not satisfy the enraged man. Being in a terrible rage, his voice raised to a high pitch, he told the chief that if he did not leave his timber at once he would move him, and, in carrying out his threats, upset a kettle containing the Indian's supper. This was too much for the old chief. It was now his turn to get angry, because forbearance had ceased to be a virtue; therefore, he took his tomahawk and knife out of his belt, laying them on the ground by the side of his rifle, and then going up to the man, said to him in broken English, his eyes flashing fire, that if he did not shut his mouth he would knock every tooth down his throat. The owner of the timber was completely cowed, he turned pale, and without saying another word made a hasty retreat, leaving Shabbona to move his encampment when it suited him.

One Fourth of July the people of Ottawa, Illinois, determined to celebrate in grand style, and at the same time raise a fund for the benefit of Shabbona. Mounted on his favorite pony, with all his Indian costume, the aged chief led the procession. That evening they gave a splendid ball in a large hall; and as the price of the tickets was high and the attendance large, quite a sum of money was realized. One of the belles of that city proposed that Shabbona should be asked to select the prettiest lady at the ball, thinking, of course, she would be the favored one.

The proposition was accepted with hilarious approval, because there were many others who had claims to beauty. When all the ladies were seated around the hall and the old chief was informed by his friend, George E. Walker, of what they wished him to do, he accepted the task, and with a broad smile on his face and a merry twinkle in his eye, which meant fun, he started at the lower end of the hall, and by a sign made them understand that he wished them to rise seriatim, as he came to each, and required them to walk up the length of the hall and back again and be seated before he examined the next. This he did to every lady in the hall, examining their dress, form and gait as critically as a horse jockey would a horse before purchase. None escaped the examination, old or young, from the girl in her teens to the aged matron, even including Okono, his four-hundred-pound squaw. When all had been examined in this way he approached his wife, slapped her on the shoulder, and remarked, "Much big, heap prettiest squaw."

There was a loud shout of approval—not of his judgment of beauty, but of his good sense and knowledge of human nature. Had he selected one of the many really beautiful young ladies, by that selection he would have offended the rest, but by choosing his own squaw, he turned the whole affair into a huge joke.

Matson informs us that a few years before his death, the aged chief gave all his family Christian names, in addition to their Indian names, assuming the name of Benjamin himself.

Our tawny hero passed away at his residence on the Illinois River, July 17, 1859, aged eighty-four years, and was buried with much ceremony in Morris Cemetery.

For many years no stone marked the grave. But at the twenty-ninth annual reunion of the Old Settlers of La Salle County, Illinois, held at Ottawa on August 19, 1897, with several thousand people present, Hon. Charles F. Gunther, of Chicago, offered a motion for the appointment of a committee of Old Settlers to devise ways and means for the erection of a suitable monument to the memory of Shabbona, to be placed where he was buried, which motion was unanimously carried. After the committee was appointed, it organized by electing P. A. Armstrong, president; C. F. Gunther, R. C. Jordan and G. M. Hollenbeck, vice-presidents; L. A. Williams, secretary, and E. Y. Griggs, treasurer. They now became incorporated under the statute as "The Shabbona Memorial Association."

All this resulted in raising funds and erecting a monument, which was unveiled and dedicated October 23, 1903.

SHABBONA GIVEN MONUMENT

People of Morris, Ill., Will Dedicate Memorial to Indian.

Morris, Ill., Oct. 28.—The Shabbona Memorial Association of this county will today dedicate a monument to the memory of Chief Shabbona, or Chemblee, an Indian who was a friend of the white man in the early days of Illinois.

The monument will be a huge bowlder of gray granite weighing many tons, and across a smooth side of it will be inscribed the words: "Shabbona, 1775-1859." This stone will be placed at the head of Shabbona's grave, where he was buried on July 27, 1859.

Shabbona, or Chemblee, his real name, was born on the banks of the Maumee river in Ohio in 1775. His father was the great chief Pontiac of the Ottawa tribe. Tecumseh found in Shabbona a trusted lieutenant, and between 1807 and 1813, the latter being the date of the battle of the Thames, Shabbona was a powerful ally.

Becoming disgusted with Gen. Proctor and the other British soldiers who were fighting with the Indians against the settlers, Shabbona and Capt. Billy Caldwell, one of the characters of the early days, left the ranks and prroceeded to the home of the Pottawattamies and other Indian tribes within the present limits of Illinois and Wisconsin.

The professional world (Columbia Mo)

October 30 1903

Chief Shabbona 1775 - July 17, 1859

The president of the association, Hon. Perry A. Armstrong, of Morris, in dedicating the monument, used corn, beans, pumpkins and tobacco, instead of corn, wine and oil, stating that "they were native products of North America, and used by the Indians. Corn and beans were their staff of life, pumpkins and squashes their relishes, and tobacco their solace. They used it in their pipes but never chewed it."

Short addresses were also made by ex-Congressman Henderson, of Princeton; Hon. M. N. Armstrong, of Ottawa, and Hon. R. C. Jordan. The latter began by saying, "Character speaks louder than words. A great man never dies. And great are the people who are great enough to know what is great. Man has shown an innate goodness by his disposition in all ages to laud the good deeds of his fellows. And that he has ever cherished ideals higher than self is proven by the tributes offered to the memory of his dead."

By the side of Shabbona slumber his wife, Canoka; Mary, his daughter; his granddaughter, Mary Okonto, and his nieces, Metwetch, Chicksaw, and Soco.

The monument is a huge bowlder of granite, fit symbol of the rugged, imperishable character of him who sleeps beneath, and contains the simple inscription:

"SHABBONA, 1775-1859"

About the Author

Larry W Jones is a songwriter, having penned over 7,700 song lyrics. Published in 22 volumes of island themed, country, cowboy, western and bluegrass songs. The entire assemblage is the world's largest collection of lyrics written by an individual songwriter.

As a wrangler on the "Great American Horse Drive", at age 68, he assisted in driving 800 half-wild horses 62 miles in two days, from Winter pasture grounds in far NW Colorado to the Big Gulch Ranch outside of Craig Colorado.

His book, "The Oldest Greenhorn", chronicles the adventures and perils in earning the "Gate-to-Gate" trophy belt buckle the hard way.

Other books published by Larry W Jones:

1. A Squirrel Named Julie and The Fox Ridge Fox
2. The Painting Of A Dream
3. The Boy With Green Thumbs and The Wild Tree Man
4. Red Cloud – Chief Of the Sioux
5. Spotted Tail – The Orphan Negotiator
6. Little Crow – The Fur Trapper's Patron
7. Chief Gall – The Strategist
8. Crazy Horse – The Vision Quest Warrior
9. Sitting Bull - The Powder River Power
10. Rain-In-The-Face – The Setting Sun Brave
11. Two Strike – The Lakota Club Fighter
12. Chief American Horse – The Oglala Councilor
13. Chief Dull Knife – The Sharp-Witted Cheyenne
14. Chief Joseph – Retreat From Grande Ronde
15. The Oregon Trail Orphans
16. Kids In Bloom Volume 1
17. Kids In Bloom Volume 2
18. Kids Animal Pals Volume 1
19. Kids Animal Pals Volume 2
20. Bird Kids Volume 1
21. Bird Kids Volume 2
22. Garden Kids Volume 1
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26. Delightful Stories For Children
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32. The Jungle Book – Kaa's Hunting
33. The Jungle Book – Tiger! Tiger!
34. The Jungle Book – The White Seal
35. The Jungle Book – Rikki-Tikki-Tavi
36. The Jungle Book – Toomai of the Elephants
37. The Jungle Book – Her Majesty's Servants
38. The Oldest Greenhorn – Second Edition
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46. Heidi
47. Cynthia Ann Parker – Comanche Bride
48. Black Beauty
49. The Call Of the Wild
50. Uncle Remus and Brer Rabbit
51. Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea
52. The Goodnight-Loving Trail – A Chuckwagon Saga
53. Ode To Toulee – From Gosling To Goose
54. China Clipper – Floatplanes Of Pan Am
55. Images Of Old England
56. Range Of A Cowboy
57. Clipper Ships – Emigrants Passage
58. Clipper Ships – Wool and Wealth
59. Clipper Ships – Iron Maidens
60. Clipper Ships – The Kiwi Connection
61. Chief War Eagle – Peacemaker Of The Sioux
62. Ohiyesa – From Sioux To Surgeon
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65. Daniel Boone On the Cumberland Trail
66. Davy Crockett Of the Wild Frontier
67. Jim Bowie – Life Legacy Legend
68. Sam Houston – Tennessee To Texas
69. Shackleton – Polar Quest
70. Death Valley Days – The Manly Trail
71. Pocahontas – Powhatan Princess
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111. Winnie-The-Pooh and Friends He Knew
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114. John Jacob Astor - Business Master
115. Mask Of The Lone Ranger
116. History Of Windsor Castle
117. The Port Royal 1692 Disaster
118. Day Of the Double Sun - The Manhattan Project
118. Riding Along the Salt Grass Trail
119. Day Of the Double Sun - The Manhattan Project
120. One Thousand And One Initial Letters
121. The Log Of Paul Bunyan – Master Woodsman
122. Rosewood 1923 - Smoke and Sorrow
123. Cofachiqui - Paramount Princess
124. Chief Powhatan - Tidewater Titan

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